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SOME *Trade in America*
35.
CONSIDERATIONS *L*

Touching the
Sugar Colonies,
WITH
POLITICAL OBSERVATIONS
In Respect to
T R A D E.

By a Person well acquainted with the SUGAR TRADE,
but at present residing in the Island of *Antigua*.



L O N D O N:
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SOME

CONSIDERATIONS

Touching the

Sugar Colonies

WITH

POLITICAL OBSERVATIONS

in respect to

T. R. A. D. E.

By a Person well acquainted with the several Islands
but at present residing in the Island of Jamaica.



LONDON

Printed for John Clarke, at the Bible and Church
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SOME CONSIDERATIONS

Touching the

Sugar Colonies, WITH POLITICAL OBSERVATIONS in Respect to TRADE.

THE Trade, as well as the State of the Sugar Colonies, has been Matter of publick Debate for some time; and particularly during the two last Sessions of Parliament: And although a great deal has been advanced this way, yet is there, I think, still room for farther Inquiry.

THAT from New England to the French Islands, as also to the Dutch Sugar Colonies, has been thoroughly examined already, which takes in Rum and Melasses with it; but the Trade for Sugar has not, and is of much larger Extent: I shall therefore speak to that in its several Branches where it is carried on by us and the French; and more particularly take notice as to Draw-backs, and also Customs upon Exportation; which are two very material Points, not only as to Sugar, but all other Commodities whatsoever.

AND I shall first consider in general, the Nature of Draw-backs and Customs upon Exportation; especially as this will in some degree affect the Foreign Trades for Sugar, to Holland, Flanders, Hamborough, and the other Northward Markets, and may contribute to promote them very much; and which would be a Benefit, not only to the Colonies, but to the Trade of Great Britain also: And upon these Trades I hardly find any thing to have been said at all.

SHORT Draw-backs then, and Customs laid upon Commodities at Exportation, by how much soever they do advance the Price to the Adventurers, by so much they must be a Hindrance to Foreign Trade; and are, if rightly considered, much more injurious, than if those Foreigners to whom such Goods are exported, should lay on any higher Rates themselves: for whatever Duties they laid on would equally affect Traders of all Nations: And when any People come to be in want of any Commodity, they must give the Price that such a particular Merchandise is to be purchased at, let it be what it will. But this is always to be remember'd, That those People who sell the cheapest, will ever stand the fairest for the Market. And it is moreover to be observed, That since the laying on of the first Subsidy, of which a Moiety only is drawn back, it has been the Wisdom of succeeding Parliaments in laying on the other Subsidies, to allow them to be all drawn back upon Exportation. Thus I say on Sugar, The first Subsidy of Eighteen Pence per Hundred, which is call'd the Old Subsidy, is but half drawn back; but the New Subsidy and One Third Subsidy laid on since, are both of them all drawn back upon Exportation. That this was done in order to promote a Foreign Trade, is plain from the Thing itself: And therefore, if the First Subsidy had been made so too, it must of course have given so much a farther Encouragement that way; and might still be a means, whether of retaining or recovering the Trade for Exportation: the Half Subsidy being a very considerable Article in Trades which afford a quick Return, as those to Holland, &c. beforementioned all do.

AND if we do but consider the Balance of Trade, this is an Article of great Account, and to which Sugar has formerly contributed very much, by the vast Quantities that have been exported to all those Places. And Antwerp used to take off abundance of clayed Sugars, and others of the best Sort; which raised the Value of those Exportations so much the more. And Hamborough, Bremen, with other the Hans Towns, and some other Northern Places of Trade besides, which constantly require great Quantities of Brown Sugar, cannot supply themselves, as having no Sugar Colonies of their own, and therefore must buy what they want from other People. And London lies certainly as commodious for those Markets as any Port in France.

WHAT I have said concerning Draw-backs upon Sugar, will as well hold in other Particulars. And Customs outwards are equally prejudicial, or worse rather; as these do mostly run upon a Peoples own Manufactures: And several Commodities have been eased from these Duties, especially the Woolen Manufactures. But I shall be cautious of intruding too far.

BUT some Commodities there are which may be considered under both Respects. If they are exported raw, that is without being manufactured, as they paid a Duty inward, they will be entitled to something of a Draw-back upon Exportation: But if they shall before their Exportation be manufactured in England, then they not only forfeit that Draw-back, but must (purely because this Part of them has given an Employment to our own People) pay another Duty outward; of which sort may be reckon'd Sugar. Sugar of all sorts, after it shall be refined and made into Loaves, being rated outward Ten Shillings per Hundred, and consequently paying Sixpence per Hundred upon Exportation. This is, by Vertue of the Act of Tonnage and Poundage, the same that lays on the Old Subsidy. Afterwards indeed, by the 9th and 10th of William the Third, (when a second Subsidy was added, which upon Brown Sugar is Eighteen Pence per Hundred more) a Drawback was given upon Refined Sugar exported
of

of Three Shillings per Hundred. And by the 2d and 3d of Queen Anne (when the One Third additional Subsidy was laid on, which upon Brown Sugar makes Sixpence per Hundred more) there was a farther Allowance of Draw-back given upon Refined Sugar exported, of One Shilling per Hundred. Nevertheless the Sixpence per Hundred Duty outward still remains payable; so that the Net Draw-back is Three Shillings and Sixpence. But this is a small Portion of what so much raw Sugar paid Custom inwards, out of which this Hundred Weight of Refined Sugar was extracted; and therefore Foreigners must still have an abundant Advantage as to the Prices their Refined Sugar may be afforded at in all other Markets whither they may send it. And the Preamble to that Part of the Act of William the Third, for allowing the Three Shillings per Hundred before mentioned, is so expressive and significant, that I think it necessary to be inserted here at large: “ And whereas great Quantities of Brown and Muscovado Sugars have formerly been Refined here in England, and afterwards exported to Foreign Markets, whereby a great Number of People have been employed, and a Manufacture carried on very profitable to this Kingdom; which Trade of Refining Sugars for Exportation will be lost, unless a Draw-back be allowed when such Sugars are exported, after they are Refined here, suitable to the Draw-back allowed on the Exportation of Brown and Muscovado Sugars, by reason Foreign Nations will be thereby enabled to Refine them cheaper abroad than they can be done here at home.” But I say with Submission, That if the whole Allowance of Draw-back already granted upon Refined Sugar, be short of Proportion to the Duties paid inwards upon the Muscovado Sugar, and it be found insufficient withal to answer the End designed; the same Reasons may be again considered, Whether they will not plead and stand good for a greater Allowance? And what will weigh farther is, That there is no Drawback at all allowed upon account of the First Subsidy paid inwards; but instead of that a Duty is laid outwards of Sixpence per Hundred. But was Sugar, after it shall be Refined, to receive a proportionable Draw-back to what Duties had been paid inwards upon the Muscovado Sugar;

Sugar; that is, was it to be exempted from the Sixpence per Hundred Duty upon Exportation; and a farther Draw-back of Three Shillings per Hundred allowed, in Consideration of that First Subsidy inwards, in the same manner and Proportion as it is allowed, in Consideration of the New Subsidy, and of the One Third Subsidy laid on afterwards: The Foreign Trade for English Refined Sugar by that means would of course take a greater Circulation; and which could, it is to be presumed, be no ways injurious, upon Oath being made, That the raw (or, which is the same, Muscovado) Sugar, any such Refined Sugar had been made from, according to the Belief and best of the Deponent's Knowledge, had paid the Duties inwards, as is already provided and practised. And the Trades that any People can really value themselves upon, are entirely comprehended under those of Manufacture and Exportation.

It may perhaps be objected, That all Trades ought to pay a proportionable Part towards the Charges of Government; as they all of them do enjoy the Benefit of Protection from it.

BUT to this the Answer will, I think, be very easy and obvious withal.

THE Exportation being the freer, will make the Importation so much the greater; by which means the Government will have an Advantage upon Duties that way: And all People that intend to thrive by Trade, must at their own Expence maintain the Charge of their own Government; otherwise they will most probably lose their Trade; and in that not only such little Advantages, but all those of greater Moment that might be otherwise proposed from it. And for this Mr. Locke seems to me to have been exactly of the same Opinion. * "A Tax, (says he) laid upon Land seems hard to the Landholder, because it is so much Money going visibly out of his Pocket; and therefore as an Ease to himself, the Landholder is al-

* Mr. Locke's Letter upon Interest.

“ ways forward to lay it upon Commodities: but if he will
 “ thoroughly consider it, and examine the Effects, he will find
 “ he buys this seeming Ease at a very dear Rate: and though
 “ he pays not this Tax immediately out of his own Purse, yet
 “ his Purse will find it by a greater Want of Money there at
 “ the End of the Year than that comes to, with the lessening
 “ of his Rents to boot; which is a settled and lasting Evil, that
 “ will stick upon him beyond the present Payment.”

BUT to with-hold or require Duties upon an Exportation, has certainly a worse Tendency than Customs inwards, or any other Duties whatsoever: not but that Customs inwards may be easily set too high; and additional Duties may in reality not only fail of increasing, but possibly lessen the Revenue, (of which the Case of Pepper is a remarkable Instance) by deterring Traders from bringing in those Sorts of Merchandise. But in the other Case, People do so far lay a Restraint upon their own Commodities, and even upon their own Manufactures too; and do directly discourage their own Trade. It seems to me no otherwise in effect, than endeavouring to bring a Toll upon Foreign Markets, (and upon such Goods as they themselves would be most benefited to have themselves free) which is in earnest laid down and immediately paid by the Importer, in expectation to have it repaid to him, by the Price he is to make at the Place to which the Goods are to be exported; but which those Foreigners it's plain (unless upon an absolute Necessity) may chuse whether they will pay or not: And when it comes, that they can buy of any other cheaper than he can afford to sell at, they certainly will not: and in such case the Trade as certainly must be lost. But to proceed:

THE Trade which the French carry on from their Islands to Spain is peculiar to themselves; and this they have but lately got into: However, this Trade, I must observe, is of much older date than their Edicts concerning it, though it was for some time under Prohibition. For in the Year 1722 the French did undoubtedly load with Sugar from their Islands a great many
 Ships

Ships for Spain, as several who were up there at the same time testified. And in the Month of July that same Year 1722, twelve Sail of French Merchant Ships passed by our Harbour of St. John's in our Fleet, most, if not all of them, bound for Calais. And the French had even before that carried on from their Islands a profitable Trade that Way, and brought in return great Sums of Money; and which was the Reason, as I was then informed, of so many Vessels going thither that Year. This I have taken notice of as a fair Indication of what Advantage this Trade may be, and as it affords no small Encouragement even beforehand. And for the Truth of it, That they did find a profitable Trade, the French being afterwards at the Pains and Expence of procuring Edicts, seem to confirm it very much.

NEITHER was an Account of those twelve Sail omitted to be given in private Advices that immediately went home from this Island; and not without commendatory Reasons for having the same Trade to be then carried on from our own Colonies. And that a free License to carry on this Trade must probably turn to a good Account, I shall here offer this single Consideration: That this Trade will only take off Part of the Surplusage of Sugar which Great Britain cannot conveniently dispense with. Upon which account it may not only be esteemed as a clear additional Accession of Trade; but without it the present Trade to our Islands must decline, and the Inhabitants of course reduced in their Manufacture.

FOR it is impossible to keep up the Trade to any Place, when the Price of the Goods that are to be thence had in return is continually declining to such a degree, that Losses must always succeed the Adventurers: But this will be as long as the Produce of our Sugar Colonies shall over-run the Consumption and Demand in Great Britain for it: and which must in time bring these Colonies to such a Condition, that no body can afford to trade among them. And then, when the Trade to these Islands sinks, and Supplies fail, Planting, and consequently

Sugar must decrease likewise; and in such manner, and till such time, as the Produce of these Colonies shall be no greater than what may be answerable to an encouraging Demand in Great Britain for it; and the Inhabitants of course will be reduced in proportion: the Consequence of which, when we come to consider it, will afford but a melancholick Prospect, even upon a civil Account; but in a military Way will be much worse. The French upon such a Reduction will no doubt make their Advantage, and upon the first War with France, (unless the People of these Islands shall be strongly assisted from home) will find it no great Difficulty to beat out those of them that may be left from making any Sugar at all. These are a powerful Enemy, and even at our very Doors; and the utmost of our Endeavours, and all that can be proposed, will hardly be sufficient to keep them out.

AND therefore this particular Trade to Spain may be very well worth Consideration, either in regard to the Trade of Great Britain, or to the necessitous Condition of these Colonies, or rather both indeed; and the more so, as the whole Benefit of it may be effectually secured, only by providing in the Act, That no Vessel should be qualified this Way, but what had a special License from great Britain, as may be judged most proper and convenient.

AND lest an Objection should be started, I shall take notice, that this Trade will not be any ways hurtful to the Sugar Manufacture in London, or in any other Part of Great Britain; and which I hope will be very clear, when we consider, That as to Quantity, these Islands to be sure do not make less than what they did formerly; but more indeed, as what is produced from the French Lands at St. Christopher's is a very good Increase. And that the Sugar Production might be still much larger, was there but an answerable Demand for it, has been sufficiently demonstrated by others: but the thing is indeed so clear in itself, that it may be taken for granted. So that had Great Britain as large an Exportation for Sugar as in former Years,

Years, or a much greater indeed, (as there is now little or none at all) the Refiners would never in any probability be to seek for sufficient Quantities for their Use. And since we cannot exclude the French from this Trade, but the Spaniards will have sufficient Supplies without us, and that even from the most dangerous Rival we have: I hope it may not be deemed an imprudent Part to admit our own Merchants, and in this our own Colonies too, to come in with them for what Share they can.

NEITHER would the Crown (as has been well observed) lose any thing; as the Duties upon what Commodities should be shipped in return would (as we may very well suppose the Goods of these Islands to be more favourably charged than those of Foreigners) sufficiently counterbalance the Customs that would be otherwise paid, was the Sugar to be directly exported to Great Britain; and even allowing that more of our Sugar should be sent thither, than what we might have Occasion to be returned in their Sorts of Merchandise; and which is an Article, as I have already observed, of the utmost Concern; as an Over-Balance in Trade, in whose Favour soever it falls, is, I think, universally acknowledged to be of as signal Service and Benefit to a People in general, as any one Particular in Trade whatsoever.

IF it be said, That (as every Kingdom, so) Great Britain ought to have the sole Benefit of her own Colonies, I say so too; and that this Trade will in all probability take nothing away but what it will make ample amends for: nay, I say farther, that it does in truth point out one Means whereby to render these Colonies of the most Use and Service to Great Britain; as has been, I hope, herein sufficiently explained.

BESIDES, as Money begets Money, and as one Improvement is the Mistress of another; so one Trade very often lays the Foundation of another: and it is not unlikely, (when we have found a Passage for Sugar through the Streights) but

that this may give us a farther Prospect; not only Sugar, but Ginger too being, as I have been informed, a very good Commodity as high as the Levant. And if so, or if there should be found any other Motive to proceed so far, I cannot think it altogether impossible but that suitable Means and proper Regulations may be thought on. However, the Advantages that may arise from any Trade can never be fully known but by Experience: and this in particular, as it will be among a rich People, plenteous in Money, affords at present as fair a Prospect as any.

IF then a License for this Spanish Trade should be deemed adviseable, as I hope it will, it may be no unprofitable Part to consider, upon what Terms our Merchants are like to stand, with relation to those of France, who do carry on, and will still continue the Trade against them. And herein particularly as to Duties.

THE Author of the Political State, in that for the Month of April 1731, has this Remark: "Even in exporting Sugars" (says he) to our Plantations on the Continent, the French Sugar Colonies have a great Advantage over ours. For as our Planters pay four and a half per Cent. upon exporting their Sugars from their own Plantations, and the French pay but one per Cent. it's evident that the French may sell their Sugars in our Plantations upon the Continent three and a half per Cent. cheaper than our own Colonies can do, granting that the prime Cost be equal in both Colonies; which is an Advantage sufficient to ruin any Trade in the World.*" But I must take notice, That the enumerated Duty, which is Five Shillings per Hundred on white Sugar, and Eighteen Pence per Hundred upon brown Sugar, is not there included or considered at all, and which is nearest now Ten per Cent. more: So that the present Difference between the French and Us, in the Duties of Sugars upon this Trade to North America, instead of Three and a Half per Cent. is nearest in reality Thirteen and

a half per Cent. which may raise it to a Wonder, that even our own English Northward Colonies take any of our Sugars at all. And it will easily appear by examining the Custom-House Accounts from these Islands, what a small Proportion of Sugar does go from hence to those Colonies, though they are belonging to the same Government : and we can never expect it will be otherwise, so long as the Duties here do so vastly exceed those at the French Islands. For what Man in his Reason will come here to trade, where he is to leave behind him about one Part in eight for Customs ; when the same Commodities may be had from the French, only upon paying One in every One Hundred and One ? Or what Man can carry on a Trade against another upon such a wide Disproportion ?

AND if this Spanish Trade should be opened, and Sugars be permitted to be carried directly from those Islands to Cales, and up the Streights ; yet unless our Customs are set something near to those at the French Islands, too great an Inconveniency must attend it.

THE extraordinary Charges it is that already hinders Sugars to be exported thither from Great Britain ; and if the Customs should be set too high here, that will still have the same Effect : and if a Duty upon the Exportation of Sugar to Spain should be added to the Four and a Half per Cent. in lieu of the Moiety of the old Subsidy undrawn back in England ; I fear both together would make the Duties too high for any Trade at all. Eighteen Pence per Hundred has been supposed to be here but a competent Allowance for that half Subsidy : but this upon clayed Sugar to cost Thirty Shillings per Hundred is Five per Cent. which added to the Four and a Half per Cent. would make the Duty Nine and a Half per Cent. instead of which the French pay but One. And the lower the Price of Sugar comes to be reduced, the higher will be the Eighteen-Penny Duty, pro Rata. However, let the given Price be, as it has been already supposed, Thirty Shillings per Hundred.

IF then a Ship should be fitted out from London, Bristol, Liverpool, Glascow, or any Part of Great Britain, with a proper Cargo for these Islands; and upon this Trade being laid open, she should be designed to go from hence with a Lading of Sugar for Cales; and another Ship at the same time should set out from Bourdeaux, Nantes, or any Port of France for the French Islands; and thence to proceed upon the same Voyage: When these two Ships shall arrive at Cales, is it to be imagined, that the Cargo of the one Ship can be afforded to be sold as cheap as that of the other? The great Difference in the Customs is an Answer sufficiently negative. The Frenchman, 'tis plain, may make a good Voyage upon the same Prices that the other cannot get a Shilling. If the French gain Eight and a Half per Cent. and that but upon the Net Cost of their Sugar, it is a great Profit; especially upon such a small Difference in the Voyage, as there is in sending the Sugar to Spain, instead of bringing it home to their own Country: And that we should get better Prices than the French cannot with any Reason be held conclusive: And Extravagancies in Trade are not to be supposed any more than in any thing else whatsoever. But then this Eight and a half per Cent. with us will all go for Customs, upon the Eighteen Pence being laid on as an additional Duty to the Four and a Half per Cent. so that the Adventurer will be able to get Nothing: and what the Issue of that will be may easily be determined. We all know that People will not work for nothing, nor trade without Encouragement; so that Merchants will hardly adventure upon those Terms; but will rather chuse to have their Sugars come directly home to them: and then the Trade will be brought just to the same Pass it was at before; that is, for the French to have it to themselves again altogether.

THUS much I thought here not to be improper, because the Time of opening any Trade is, I think, the most suitable for such Inquiries: and I presume that the Four and a Half per Cent. is in itself a high Duty, especially if compared with that
at

at the French Islands: and therefore, I hope that it will be rather considered, How much of the present Duties may be taken off, than any Increase laid on.

THESE that I have mentioned are, I think, the chief Markets for Sugar in Europe, especially with Foreigners. However,

THE Trade to Ireland is of no mean Account; and therefore it may be necessary to say something upon that: but that the French should carry on from their Islands any open Trade themselves is not to be supposed; our Act of Navigation is too strict for any such thing as that. Neither does it seem feasible to me, that the French should find a Way for their Sugar through Ireland, to Holland, Hamborough, or any other of the Northward Markets: not only because Ireland by its Situation makes the Voyage of too great a Disadvantage, but the Rate of Duties in Ireland with the Smallness of the Debenture will advance the Price too much for any Profit to be had that Way: and therefore what Instances may be given, must be, I presume, something extraordinary. So that the whole Concern of this Trade will turn, I think, upon this Question, Whether the Permission given to Ships duly qualified, to bring into Ireland from the West-Indies, Sugars, and other Commodities of Foreign Growth, when at the same time they are prohibited from importing there, directly from the Plantations, Sugars and other the same Commodities, of the Growth and Produce of our own English Colonies, be generally advantageous or not?

WHAT may be said for it is this, That it is an Advantage to any People to have their Ships employed, and so to carry the Goods of other Nations: That the Dutch have throve very much by this Way of Business; and was it not for our Act of Navigation, That they would still find their Advantage, in carrying ours, or any Sugars home, or any where else from these Islands, as they did formerly, before that Act was made. But,

ON the other Side: That Freight is a very beneficial Article is not to be denied; and if the Employment of our Ships was the only thing to be considered, the Advantage would be clear enough. But (if I understand rightly) that is not the Thing now in Question; but in Truth, Whether it would not be in general more beneficial to bring home to Market the Goods and Produce of our own People, and belonging to the same Community, than those of Foreigners?

HAD we not sufficient of our own, much might be said in favour of carrying French Sugars: but as our English Islands do produce abundantly more than what Great Britain and Ireland can dispense with; the Argument must be considered accordingly. The more of the French Sugars then than are brought into Ireland this Way, the less will consequently go thither from Great Britain; and the more of our own Sugars stick a-hand of course: So that by this means, instead of making any Advantage by Freight, it will only terminate in cutting ourselves short in the Sale of our own Merchandise, and discouraging the Produce of our own Plantations: and therefore it may, I think, be reasonably concluded, That the Sugars of our own Islands should be the Lading to Ireland, (which would be altogether as beneficial to the Ship-Owners) rather than for the Ships to go to any other Port for French Sugars, or Sugars of any other Country. Besides, this would be a powerful Means absolutely to exclude the French from having in Ireland any thing to do at all; especially upon any smuggling clandestine Trade which they might otherwise endeavour at, by not making it worth the Hazard and Cost that must attend it; which is the surest Way of Prevention, and the best Means of rendering a Prohibition effectual whatsoever; and must, in all probability, prove of general good Consequence to all Parties, Whether we consider the British Trade, The Supply of Ireland, or, The Manufacture and Subsistence of our own Colonies. And the Crown then by Duties would manifestly gain likewise: because, That upon what Sugars of our own Plantations shall go to Ireland directly,

more Duty will arise to the King, than what will be remaining upon those that shall go thither by the Way of Great Britain; and the People of Ireland be subject still to no higher Duties than what are paid even by the People of Great Britain; and what they themselves do already pay upon French Sugars that are now permitted to be brought thither from the West-Indies: and the Smallness of the Draw-back (which, according to the Irish Book of Rates, printed anno 1702, is but Ninepence per Hundred) will at the same time still secure the British Exportation.

IF it be alledged, That Trade, as well as Navigation, is concerned in these Foreign Sugars that are brought to Ireland; this is in a great measure answered already by what has been just now said upon Freight; seeing that the Sugar that is produced from our own English Colonies, is manifestly more than sufficient for the whole Trade of Great Britain and Ireland in that Commodity: and consequently the more of the Trade that goes to the French Islands, the less will be to our own: but this cannot result to the general Advantage of Great Britain, purely for this Reason, Because there can be no certain Dependence upon this Trade, longer than the French shall think it to be for their own Advantage: for we may most assuredly conclude, That as soon as the French shall judge it for their Interest to exclude all other Shipping from trading to their Colonies but their own, they'll soon find a Way to do it: and an Edict enjoining the Masters to give Security, will no doubt be as effectual with them, as our Act of Navigation is with us: and then away goes all that Business of Trade and Navigation too; which as to our own Colonies will ever be within our own Disposal. And it may, I presume, be well worth considering, Whether the same Reasons for laying high Duties upon Foreign Sugars may not as well hold in Ireland as in England? Surely we ought to cut the French short all we can, otherwise they will be entirely Masters of the Sugar Trade.

THE Trade from New England to the French Islands has been spoken of at large by others ; as I have already observed in the Beginning of this Discourse : but the high Rates of Customs paid here upon Goods exported to all our English Northern Colonies, is an Article which I think will still bear an Examination.

THIS is a Matter of mutual Concern, and does in some measure affect them, though us a great deal more. And Customs upon other Commodities that pay an enumerated Duty (to take one with another) are much about as high as they are upon Sugar, and of which I have already spoken under the Spanish Trade. But as these Duties are not only of Prejudice to those Islands, but do also give the French, as to Trade, a great Advantage over us ; I shall take notice of another Commodity in particular, which is Cocoa.

THIS the French not many Years ago made abundance of, but now little or none at all. But when they did make it, the Price to buy their French Cocoa here in this Island was by the Quantity, in Times of Plenty, nearest Four Pounds per Hundred. Supposing then that the Planters here had gone upon Cocoa as well as they, no body that wanted to ship it for New England, or any Part of the Main, (whither sometimes large Quantities have been sent) could have afforded to have given our Planters that Price by a great deal ; and that because of the very Duties : for the Four and a Half per Cent. with the enumerated Duty added to it, (which is One Penny per Pound) both together amount very nearly to Fifteen per Cent. and which must be paid upon all Cocoa that shall be the Produce of his Majesty's own English Colonies : whereas upon purchasing French Cocoa, and shipping it to the same Market, there is no more than Six Shillings, let the Quantity be more or less, to be paid here for a Certificate from the Custom-House, That it is Foreign Cocoa ; and then it goes out free of all Duties and Customs whatsoever, as being not of the Growth of our own Colonies.

Colonies. This I speak experimentally, and any one may be satisfied that will but look into the Act of Parliament that lays on these enumerated Duties, which is the 25th of Charles the Second. So that should the People of these Islands and the French, now or at any Time hereafter, go together upon the planting of Cocoa Trees, the French might afford to sell that Commodity, even in our own Colonies where it grows, and within our own Harbours too, much cheaper than we can propose to do it here ourselves: and so it must be with all Commodities upon which those high Duties run. And although we should enlarge the Sense of our Acts, and so as to make their Commodities pay here the same Duties with our own; yet would that be to us no Relief at all, because they would still undersell us at Foreign Markets, which would prove every whit as bad. But again,

CIRCUMSTANCES are very much alter'd with respect to the Sugar Plantations now, to what they were at the Time when the Act for laying these enumerated Duties was made; so that there is not the same Reason for continuing these Duties as there was for laying them on. The French then made but very little Sugar, and the Dutch hardly any at all; so that most of the Markets in Europe, especially for Brown Sugar, were supplied by the English. And the Reason for laying these enumerated Duties was, Because that the Inhabitants of divers of our own Colonies did, having their Sugar, &c. Custom free, "Vend great Quantities thereof to the Shipping of other Nations, "who brought them into divers Parts of Europe," (as the Act expressly says.) But the Case with the Sugar Colonies is now quite otherwise; the French are arrived to such a Pitch, that they make now abundantly more Sugar than we do; and thereby not only supply the Foreign Markets, but those of our English Northern Colonies likewise: So that instead of Supplies of Sugar going this Way to Foreign Markets, as that Act complains; it is so much the Reverse, that the French do even drive us out of our own Trade: and this is in a great measure by means of these very Duties, which certainly never were intended for

that Purpose. And therefore it is to be hoped, That they will be considered accordingly.

I HAVE gone through what I designed ; but it may not I think be improper to touch upon one Affair relating to this particular Island of Antigua. And though this perhaps may seem trivial to others, yet it is here of some Concern, and may, in the Way of Comparifon, more diftinctly lay open and explain the Nature of Draw-backs, than Places that afford a greater Trade.

THE Duty upon Madera Wines was ufually here all drawn back upon Exportation, provided the Wines have been taken from on board, and carried away without being landed ; and great Quantities, by means of this very Encouragement, have at feveral times been exported from this Island, and that for the City of London. However, it has lately been difcovered to be a Miftake ; and upon the Treafurer's making Application to the Council and Affembly for Inftuctions in that Point, (the Act for laying the Duty feeming to him to allow of a Draw-back for no more than Half) the Explanation of the Act has been in Difavour of the former Practice : So that any Wines that fhall hereafter be exported, (unlefs they are carried out by the fame Veffel that brought them in, and never put over her Side here at all) cannot have the Advantage of drawing back more than thofe Wines that are actually landed and houfed, which is only a Moiety of what Duty is paid upon Importation.

NOW what I fhall obferve here is, That the with-holding this Half Part will be in reality of no Advantage to the Publick, even in the very Point that it is efpecially designed it fhould, which is that of Duties.

FOR what will it avail to detain Wines here, upon account of not allowing their full Draw-back ? By hindering Wines from going out, we certainly prevent as many more from coming in : by which means (faving fome few Exceptions not worth notice)

the Publick will have the Benefit of Duty for no more than what is expended by the Inhabitants themselves. But upon a free Exportation, we shall always have an Opportunity to furnish ourselves with what we want; and consequently have as many left with us as the Island can take off, the whole Duties upon which must be paid. So that with respect to the Treasury, it will either Way amount to the same thing.

BUT as to the other Part, which is Trade: The detaining of this Half Duty will in that respect be absolutely prejudicial to the Country in general.

FOR the more Wines that shall be exported, the more will the Island be ready to receive in again; and the more Vessels stay upon that Account. And every Vessel that does stay, leaves no inconsiderable Matter behind it. The Master and the Men too must be at some Expence; and whatsoever may be wanted for Fitting, Victualling, or for any thing else, must be paid for. The Storage, Wharfage, and other Charges for Landing and Shipping off are of some Account: and the Cargo is generally laid out in the Produce of the Island; which will help to keep up, if not mend the Price. Then the Vessel again may be of some Service with respect to Freight for any Place where she is bound to. And sometimes the Master values himself upon an Inhabitant, which still adds to the Benefit of the Community. These I say are Advantages which do arise from a Vessel with Wines only. But sometimes the Vessel has other Goods also, and the Advantages then will be still the greater: and every thing, by how much it promotes and enlarges Trade, by so much it is the more beneficial. And all these I hope may amount to a sufficient Reason for making an Amendment in the Act itself; and so as to allow a full Draw-back upon all Wines whatsoever; as well upon those that are landed as those that are not. But besides all this, the surest Means to render the Markets for Wines (or any thing else indeed) generally low, is, To make it as free and open as possible; for People have without doubt, generally speaking, better Opportunities to buy where there is

a Fluency of Trade, than where Importations are made more sparingly.

AND here let us but enlarge our Ideas, and we may hence form a pretty clear Notion of Draw-backs in general; and consequently as to Places of more extensive Traffick, as these do all stand upon the same Foundation, and must each of them hold in a due Proportion. And we shall find it true, That no Kingdom or Country whatsoever, let them require more or less, or their Exportations be ever so great, will be without sufficient Supplies of any Commodities, so long as their Markets shall afford an encouraging Profit to the Makers and the Importers. But wheresoever Duties are laid on, and not fully drawn back upon Exportation, those People must expect in time to have no more imported than what will serve their own Consumption; because others who are under no such Disadvantages, will undersel them, and consequently in the end be too many for them at Foreign Markets. But, as a French Author well observes, “ * There are very few things in Government which deserve more our Attention than this Article of Commerce. “ *And* to be convinced of this Truth, we have nothing else to do, but consider the Difference there is between those Countries where Trade flourishes, and those Countries who have none.” People may by some natural Advantages, ’tis true, carry their Point a great way; but in a Commodity that their Neighbours can interfere with them in, as soon as they shall come to be upon a level in other Respects, these undrawn Duties will discover themselves then of what Mischief they are. But the Way for any People to preserve Trade, and even to discourage other Nations from endeavouring to advance themselves against them is, To avoid laying any Burthen upon Goods to be exported to Foreign Markets, that so the People may afford to sell them there as cheap as possible. This Argument will admit of a great deal more; but what I have already said may, I think, be sufficient to determine the Point in Question; I shall

* Preface to Memoirs of the Dutch Trade, translated from the French by mber.

therefore only speak a Word or two upon Sugar, and the Duties it is subject to, and so conclude.

THE Duty then that Sugar pays is, First, Four and a Half per Cent. here in these Islands: This runs upon all our Sugar shipp'd off either to Great Britain or elsewhere; and this was laid on before the enumerated Duty, and by the People of these Islands themselves: Those of Jamaica indeed wisely, and to their Advantage, never would come into it. But in Barbadoes, and these Leeward Caribbee Islands, upon shipping Three and Twenty Hogsheds of Sugar, one is instantly paid for Custom; and upon the Arrival of those Three and Twenty in Great Britain, Three Shillings and Sixpence per Hundred is to be paid for Duties upon them there, which in Muscovado Sugar is now much about Thirty per Cent. more upon the Net Proceed, (and for which I may appeal to the Sale of his Majesty's own Sugars made in November last *, and I don't hear that Sugars are mended in Price since.) These are heavy Articles this Way: and those few Sugars that go to our Northern Colonies, pay high Duties that Way: and our Trade for Sugar being much contracted to what it was, All these, together with the poor (and worse like to be) Condition of those Colonies, may, I hope, be thought worthy of a very serious Consideration. And what I have chose to offer upon this Occasion, has been the more general, that it may be the farther useful. And if Trade be of the utmost Concern, as it most certainly is, the Means to preserve it must be so too: and I hope that what is here offer'd may be conducive to it.

*-Note, this was wrote in May 1732.

F I N I S.

N. B. The Author is mistaken in his sixth Page. He says wrought Sugar upon Exportation pays Sixpence per Hundred, and that the Nett Draw-back is but Three Shillings and Sixpence: The Draw-back is Four Shillings; for by the 8th Geo. 1. cap. 15. all Duties payable on any Goods and Merchandize of the Product and Manufacture of Great Britain ceas'd from the 25th of March 1722, excepting some few Goods therein mentioned, of which Sugar is not one; consequently the Duty of Sixpence per Hundred laid on it by the Tonnage and Poundage Act, is thereby discharg'd.

Just Publish'd:

A Comparison between the British Sugar Colonies and New England, as they relate to the Interest of Great Britain. With some Observations on the State of the Case of New England. To which is added, a Letter to a Member of Parliament.

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